

# LABOR MARKET TRENDS



Latest  
Unemployment Rate

Volume 1: Issue 2 March 2020

S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce

LMI Division

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## Employment growth continues; unemployment rate climbs to 2.6 percent

**Employment:** The seasonally adjusted monthly survey of households referencing the week of March 12th estimated the number of South Carolinians working rose, establishing a new record of 2,334,652, which yields an employment-population ratio of 56.9 percent.

- That is an increase of 1,428 people over February 2020.
- That is also a significant increase of 43,290 people over March 2019.

**Unemployment:** Unemployment increased to 61,898 people.

- That is an increase of 3,267 people since February 2020 and a significant decrease of 17,983 over March 2019.
- The state’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 2.6 percent over the month from February’s rate of 2.5 percent.

**Labor force:** The state’s estimated labor force (people working plus people not working but looking for work) increased to 2,396,550.

- That is an increase of 4,695 people since February 2020.
- That is an increase of 25,307 individuals over March 2019.
- The labor force participation rate in March 2020 was 58.4 percent, increasing from 58.3 percent in February.

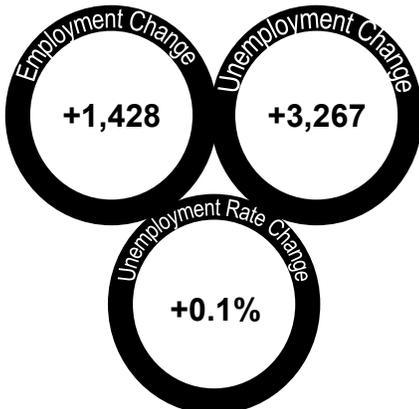
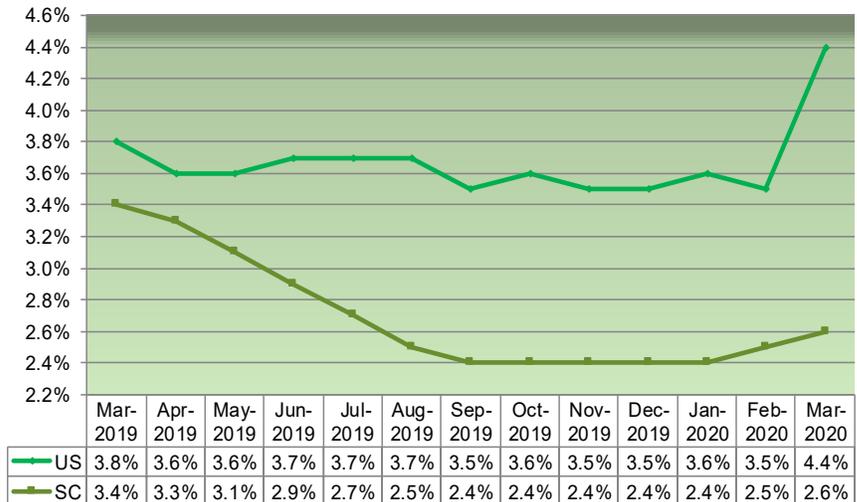
View the [S.C. Employment Situation Report](#)

### Economic Indicators

March 2020 - Seasonally Adjusted

	U.S.	S.C.
Labor Force	162,913,000	2,396,550
Employed	155,772,000	2,334,652
Unemployed	7,140,000	61,898
Unemployed Rate	4.4%	2.6%

South Carolina vs U.S. Unemployment Rate  
March 2019 - March 2020



**LABOR MARKET TRENDS** is prepared in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics by the LMI Division of the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce. The current month’s estimates are preliminary, while all previous data are subject to revision. All estimates are projected from a first quarter 2019 benchmark. To subscribe to **LABOR MARKET TRENDS** or for additional information, please email [LMICustomerService@dew.sc.gov](mailto:LMICustomerService@dew.sc.gov) or to provide feedback please click on the [LMI Customer Feedback Form](#).

### U.S. unemployment rate vaults higher in March; S.C. rate rises to 2.6 percent, ranked 2nd lowest in nation

Unemployment rates were higher in March in 29 states and the District of Columbia, lower in three states and stable in 18 states. Twenty-three states had jobless rate increases from a year earlier, three states had decreases and 24 states and the District had little or no change. The national unemployment rate rose by 0.9 percentage point over the month to 4.4 percent, while South Carolina's unemployment rate rose to 2.6 percent, ranking 2nd lowest, along with Hawaii, Idaho and New Hampshire, of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Nonfarm payroll employment decreased in 31 states in March 2020 and was essentially unchanged in 19 states and the District of Columbia. Thirteen states had over-the-year increases in nonfarm payroll employment in March, two had decreases and 35 states and the District of Columbia were unchanged. The largest job gains occurred in Texas (+250,900), California (+150,400) and Florida (+126,000).

### March unemployment rates by county

County unemployment rate changes were mixed across the state as the not seasonally adjusted statewide unemployment rate fell by 0.1 percentage point over the month. Rates ranged from a low of 2.4 percent in Charleston and Lexington counties to a high of 6.5 percent in Allendale County.



March 2020

### State Unemployment Rates

North Dakota	2.2
Hawaii	2.6
Idaho	2.6
New Hampshire	2.6
<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>2.6</b>
Massachusetts	2.9
Kansas	3.1
Minnesota	3.1
Oklahoma	3.1
Indiana	3.2
Maine	3.2
Vermont	3.2
Maryland	3.3
Oregon	3.3
South Dakota	3.3
Virginia	3.3
Wisconsin	3.4
Alabama	3.5
Montana	3.5
Tennessee	3.5
Utah	3.6
Connecticut	3.7
Iowa	3.7
Wyoming	3.7
New Jersey	3.8
Michigan	4.1
Georgia	4.2
Nebraska	4.2
Florida	4.3
North Carolina	4.4
<b>United States</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Colorado	4.5
Missouri	4.5
New York	4.5
Illinois	4.6
Rhode Island	4.6
Texas	4.7
Arkansas	4.8
Delaware	5.1
Washington	5.1
California	5.3
Mississippi	5.3
Arizona	5.5
Ohio	5.5
Alaska	5.6
Kentucky	5.8
New Mexico	5.9
District of Columbia	6.0
Pennsylvania	6.0
West Virginia	6.1
Nevada	6.3
Louisiana	6.9

Economic Indicators				
Average Hours & Earnings				
	United States (SA)	Monthly Change	S.C. (Unadj.)	Monthly Change
Manufacturing				
Avg Weekly Earnings	\$1,145.34	-\$4.44	\$901.89	\$27.02
Avg Weekly Hours	40.4	-0.3	41.6	-0.1
Avg Hourly Wages	\$28.35	\$0.10	\$21.68	\$0.70

### South Carolina nonfarm employment trends for March—seasonally adjusted

The survey of businesses in South Carolina marked a decrease of 13,400 seasonally adjusted, nonfarm payroll jobs in March to a level of 2,203,700.

Industries reporting increases in employment were Government (+900); Financial Activities (+600) and Manufacturing (+200).

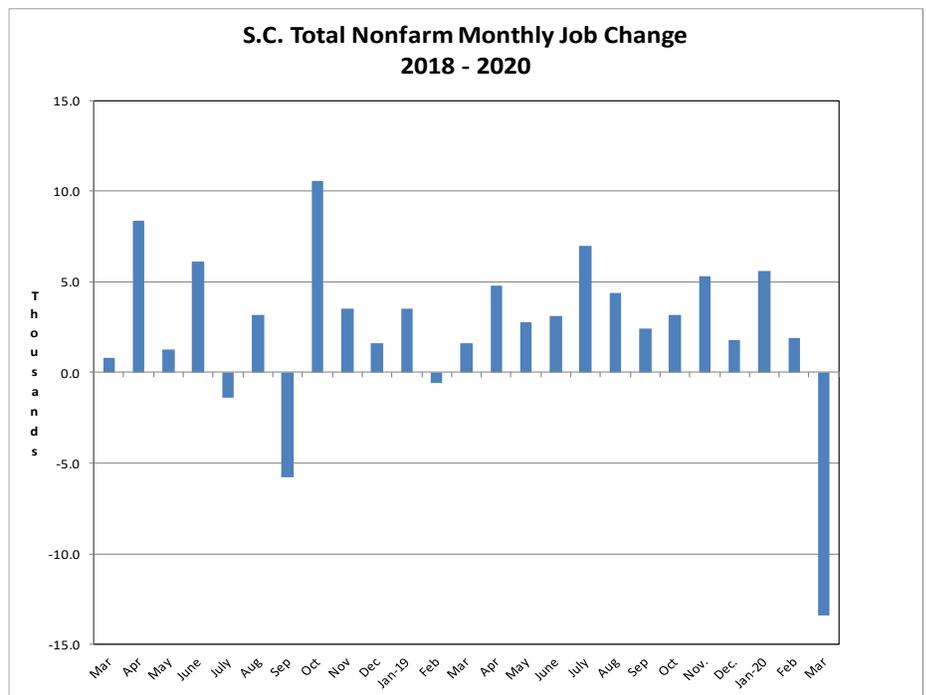
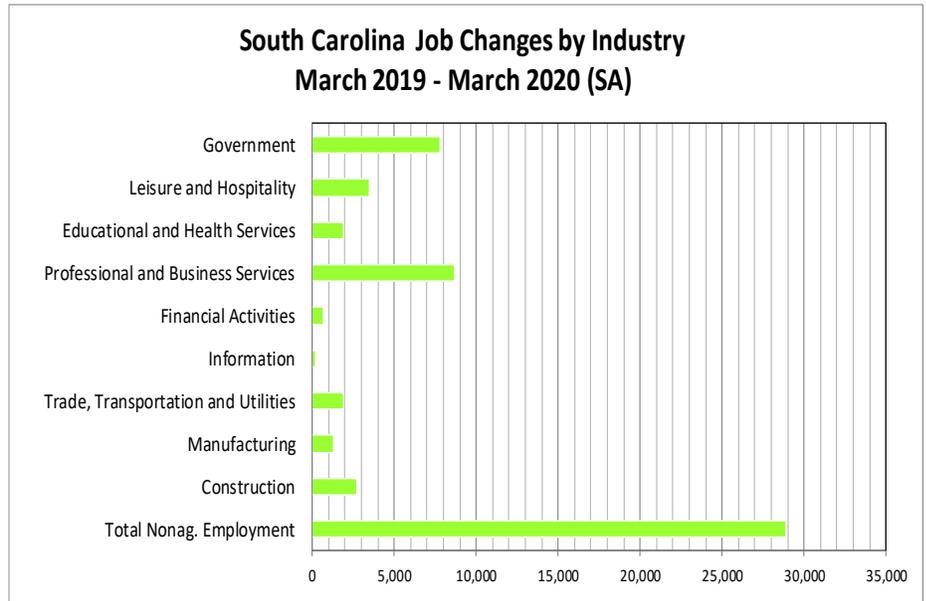
Decreases were noticed in the Leisure and Hospitality (-10,200); Trade, Transportation and Utilities (-2,200); Construction (-900); Other Services (-800); Education and Health Services (-700); Information (-100) and Professional and Business Services (-100) industries.

Retail Trade saw a decrease of (-400).

From March 2019 to March 2020, South Carolina’s economy has added 28,900 seasonally adjusted, nonfarm jobs.

Industries with strong growth were Professional and Business Services (+8,700); Government (+7,800); Leisure and Hospitality (+3,500); Construction (+2,700); Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (+1,900); Education and Health Services (+1,900); Manufacturing (+1,300); Financial Activities (+700); Other Services (+200) and Information (+200). Retail Trade also saw an increase of (+1,900). No industries reported decreases over the year.

For the Metropolitan Statistical Areas, seasonally adjusted, nonfarm payroll job increases were seen in Spartanburg (+200).



Economic Indicators (March 2020)		
Top Job Growth by MSA (SA)		
	Over Month %	Over Year %
	Change	Change
Columbia MSA	-0.05%	1.52%
Florence MSA	-0.11%	-0.33%
Greenville MSA	-0.16%	0.32%
Sumter MSA	-0.50%	0.76%

To see the monthly not seasonally adjusted data series, go to [www.SCWorkforceInfo.com](http://www.SCWorkforceInfo.com) (Employment and Wage Data section)

South Carolina economic indicators



S.C. Job Postings by Industry, March 2020

NAICS Code	Industry	Job Postings
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	12,344
44-45	Retail Trade	8,015
72	Accommodation and Food Services	4,433
31-33	Manufacturing	3,694
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3,278
61	Educational Services	3,035
52	Finance and Insurance	2,969
92	Public Administration	2,849
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management	1,834
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	1,222
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,099
23	Construction	1,042
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	874
51	Information	789
42	Wholesale Trade	494
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	434
22	Utilities	137
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	104
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	84
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	58

Source: Labor Insight Jobs (Burning Glass Technologies)

S.C. Average Weekly Wage by Industry Group, 2019Q3

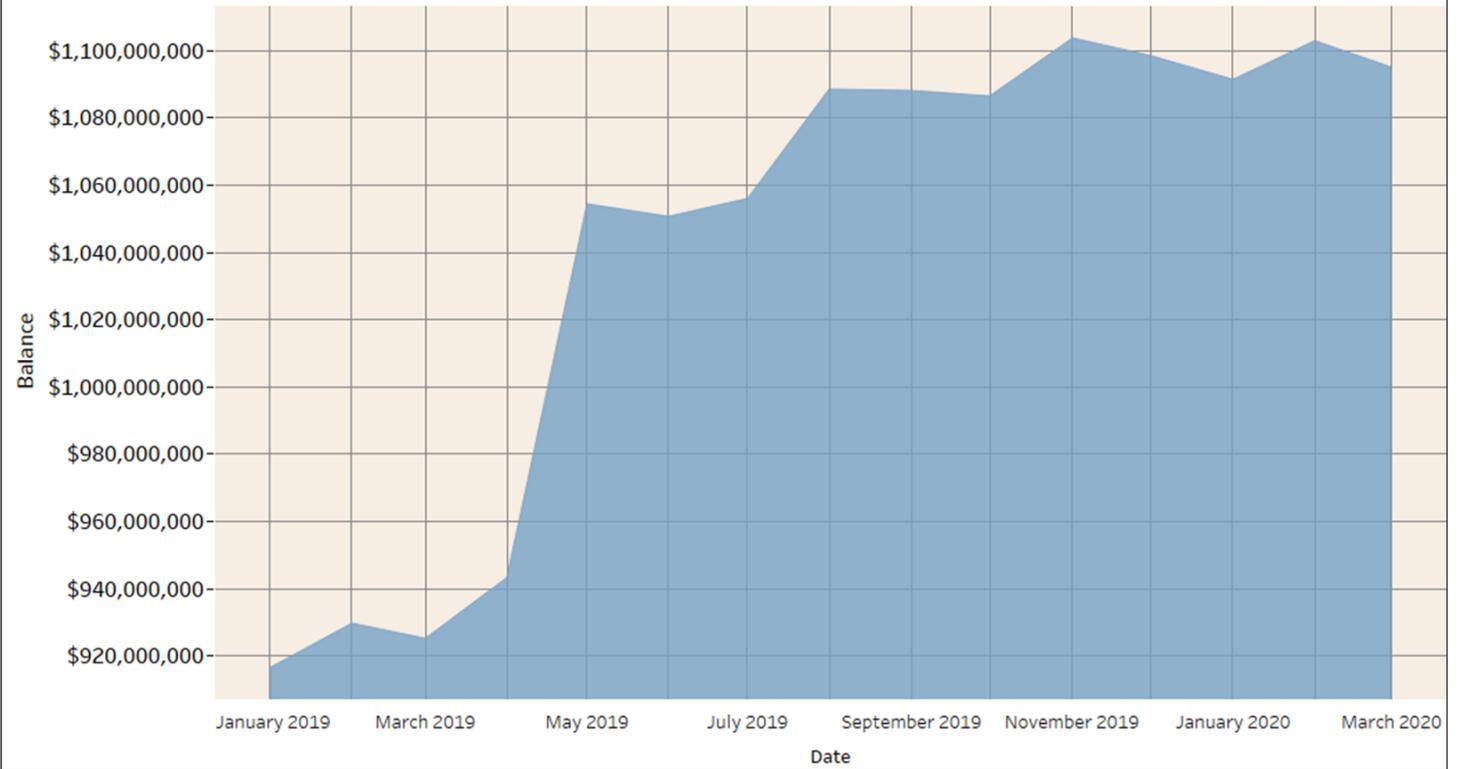
Industry Group	Avg Wkly Wage	Perc Chg from Yr Ago
Total, All Industries	\$866	3.6%
Natural Resources and Mining	\$828	9.7%
Construction	\$1,033	5.5%
Manufacturing	\$1,116	2.3%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	\$780	4.1%
Information	\$1,167	5.8%
Financial Activities	\$1,150	3.5%
Professional and Business Services	\$969	4.2%
Education and Health Services	\$940	3.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	\$367	4.6%
Other Services	\$650	3.5%
Public Administration	\$912	3.1%

Source: DEW, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

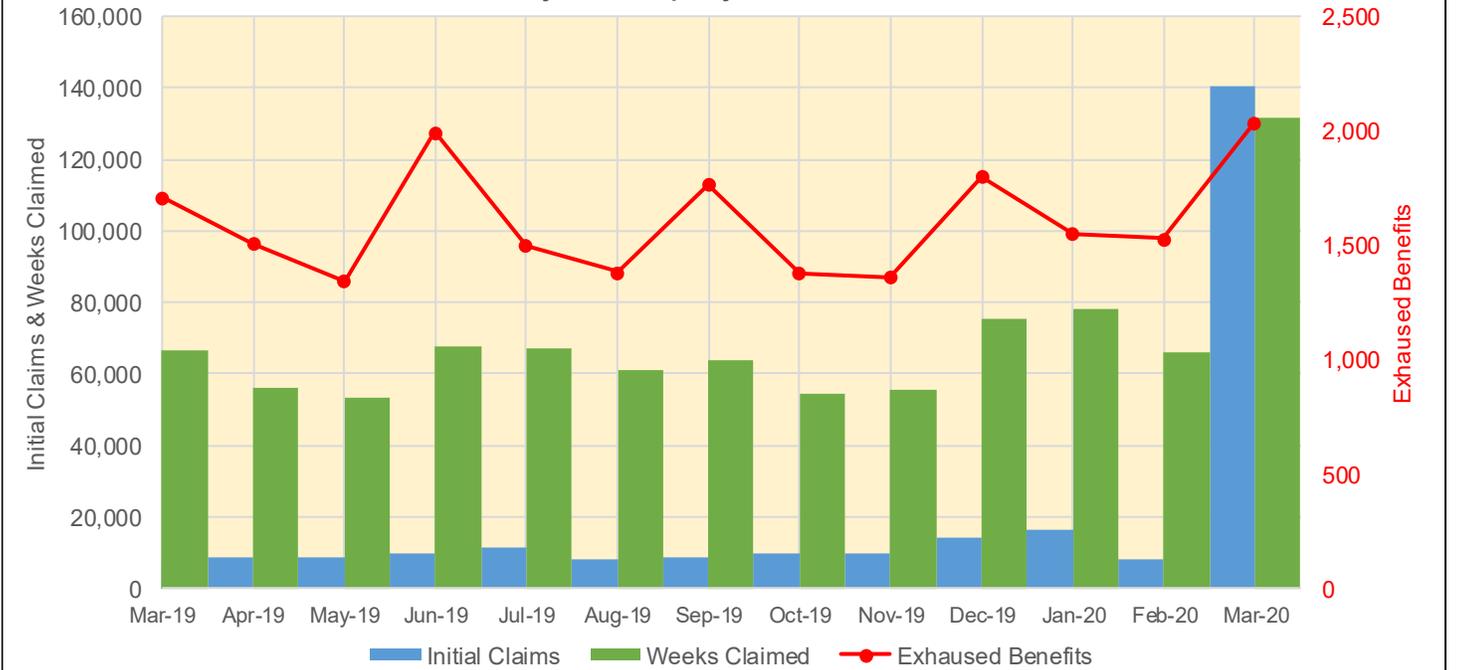
South Carolina economic indicators

S.C. Unemployment Trust Fund Balance

Source: U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Fiscal Service



S.C. Monthly Unemployment Claims Statistics



Source: U.S. Department of Labor

## How many workers are employed in sectors directly affected by COVID-19 shutdowns, where do they work and how much do they earn?

An excerpt from an article in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Monthly Labor Review*, April 2020.....

To reduce the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), nearly all states have issued stay-at-home orders and shut down establishments deemed non-essential. Answering the following questions is crucial to assessing the potential labor market impacts of the shutdown policy: How many jobs are in the industries that are shut down? Where are these jobs located? What wages do they pay?

We provide answers to these questions by using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) and Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) programs.<sup>1</sup> The QCEW program produces quarterly counts of employment and wages reported by employers, covering more than 95 percent of all U.S. jobs. These data are available, by industry, at the county, metropolitan statistical area, state and national levels. The OES program produces annual employment and wage estimates for nearly 800 occupations.

Our analysis begins by identifying industries directly affected by the shutdown orders. To this end, we borrow from a recent analysis by Joseph S. Vavra, who notes that “six of the most directly exposed sectors include: Restaurants and Bars, Travel and Transportation, Entertainment (e.g., casinos and amusement parks), Personal Services (e.g., dentists, daycare providers, barbers), other sensitive Retail (e.g., department stores and car dealers) and sensitive Manufacturing (e.g., aircraft and car manufacturing).”<sup>2</sup>

Where are the jobs in the shutdown sectors located?

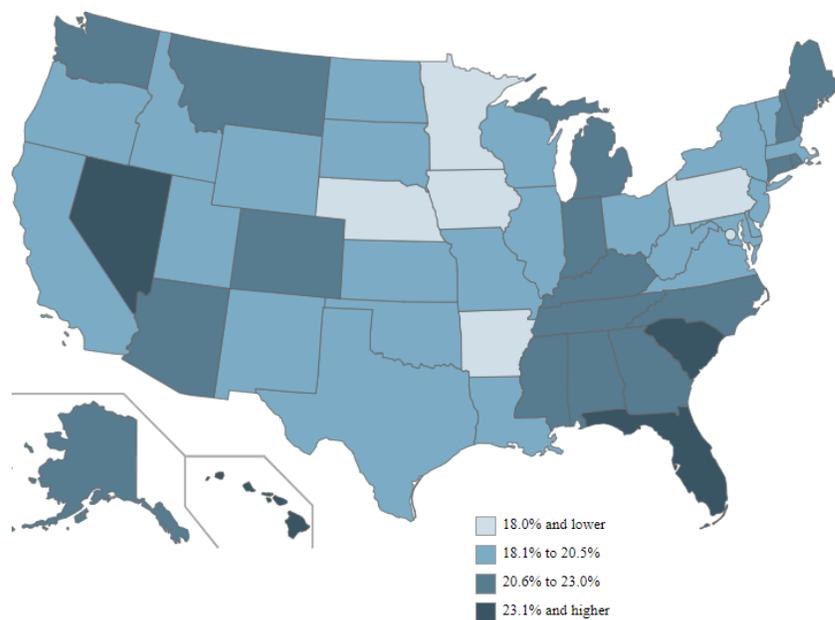
As shown in figure 3, the share of employment in the most directly affected sectors varies greatly by state. Nevada (34.3 percent), Hawaii (31.1 percent), Florida (23.7 percent) and South Carolina (23.1 percent) all have more than 23 percent of their employment concentrated in the highly exposed sectors. This concentration is due to those states' high share of employment in the travel and transportation sector, reflecting the importance of tourism to their economies. On the other hand, Midwestern agricultural states generally have less employment in the most exposed sectors. Nebraska (16.3 percent), Iowa (16.8 percent), Arkansas (17.4 percent) and Minnesota (17.4 percent) all have less than 18 percent of their employment in the highly exposed sectors. Additionally, because of the presence of the federal government, only 12.9 percent of employment in the District of Columbia is in the most exposed sectors.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> “Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages” (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), <https://www.bls.gov/cew/>; and “Occupational Employment Statistics” (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), <https://www.bls.gov/oes/home.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph S. Vavra, “Shutdown sectors represent large share of all U.S. employment” (Chicago, IL: Becker Friedman Institute for Economics at the University of Chicago, March 31, 2020), <https://bfi.uchicago.edu/insight/blog/key-economic-facts-about-covid-19/>. In his communication with us, Vavra made it clear that his designation of certain industries as being highly exposed was subjective, but we found his listing quite reasonable. One could quibble about certain industries, but we are convinced that reasonable modifications to the list are likely to have relatively minor effects on our overall findings.

Figure 3. Share of June 2019 employment in most exposed sectors, by state



Hover over a state to see data.  
 Hover over legend items to see states in a category.  
 Source: Authors' calculations based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data.

[Click here to go to the original article.](#)